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ABSTRACT

This brochure is intended to help parents support their children in reading comprehension and fluency. The brochure is divided into seven main sections. The first section addresses preparation that good readers engage in before reading the materials, including: (1) previewing the text; (2) thinking about the topic; (3) setting a purpose for reading the material; (4) focusing attention; and (5) making predictions. The second section details engagement strategies for good readers in the areas of checking understanding and monitoring comprehension. The third section lists responses good readers engage in after reading materials, including summarizing, evaluating, and finding additional information about the topic. The fourth section, on book selection, focuses on factors that affect understanding the text and on book selection strategies. The fifth section addresses fostering excitement and motivation for reading, while the sixth section addresses the issue of asking questions to develop good reading habits before, during, and after reading. The seventh section provides tips for working with children by building a good reading background and promoting motivation, critical response, and writing. (SD)

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Reading with Your Elementary Child

Tips for Parents — Grades 3-5

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Introduction

This brochure is intended to help parents support their children in reading comprehension and fluency. The information and activities included are consistent with the *North Carolina English Language Arts Standard Course of Study* and sound educational practices. The suggestions in this brochure will enable you to help your child become a good reader.

Good readers learn habits and strategies that enable them to understand what they read and problem solve when they experience difficulty. This brochure focuses on comprehension because it is the focus of the End-of-Grade Test. If your child has difficulty with word identification, contact your child's teacher for assistance.

Good readers in the elementary grades develop strategies that they use before, during, and after reading.

Preparation (Before reading of the text material)

Before reading, good readers:

PREVIEW THE TEXT.

- Skim the first page, book jacket, etc.
- Look at charts, graphs, and illustrations.
- Scan (flip through) the entire book.
- Read captions, major headings, subheadings.

THINK ABOUT THE TOPIC.

- I know...
- I remember ...
- I wonder ...
- Turn captions, major headings, and subheadings into questions.

SET A PURPOSE FOR READING THE MATERIAL.

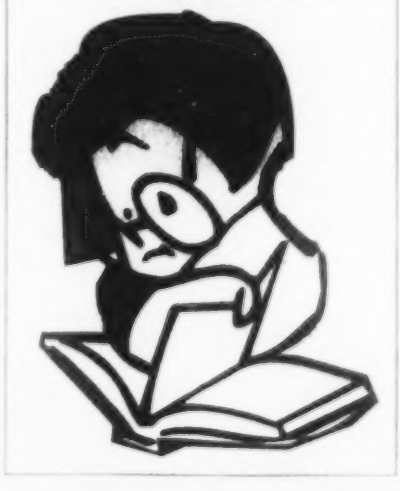
- Why do I have to read this?
- What's in this for me?
- I like books about ...
- I like books by ...
- This will tell me what I need to know about ...
- I like mysteries, fairytales, informational books...

FOCUS ATTENTION ON READING.

- Turn off the TV.
- BE QUIET!
- Where can I go to read?
- Put in the earplugs.

MAKE PREDICTIONS.

- This book looks like it's about...
- I bet I know what's in here!
- I bet I'll learn ...
- I wonder if ...
- Will it (the book, the article, newspaper) answer my questions?
- I want to know...



Engagement (During reading of the text material)

During reading, good readers:

CHECK UNDERSTANDING.

- Summarize text read.
- Put information into own words.
- The author said ...
- I think the author means ...
- Retell the ...

MONITOR COMPREHENSION.

- Ask, "Does this make sense? Is this believable? "
- Think about how this new information fits with what you already know. Consider this example: "I know insects have six legs. The book says a spider has eight legs. So a spider is not an insect because it has eight legs."
- Make adjustments as necessary for understanding (reread, read on, check other resources, question, etc.).
- Focus entire attention on the reading task.
- Keep reading when encountering difficulties.
- "This doesn't make sense to me. I'll just read a little further to see if it becomes clearer." REMEMBER: "I think I can." "I think I can." "I T-H-I-N-K I CAN!"

Response (After reading of the text material)

After reading, good readers:

SUMMARIZE WHAT THEY HAVE READ.

- I learned ...
- The author's main point was ...
- The message (theme) is...
- This is what I need to remember.
- I remember...

THINK ABOUT AND EVALUATE THE INFORMATION AND IDEAS IN THE SELECTION.

- I can use this idea.
- I can use this information when we discuss _____ in our class.
- I can use this information when my friend comes to visit.
- This book says _____, but ...
- Another source said ...
- I saw on television that ...

LOOK FOR ADDITIONAL READING AND INFORMATION ON THE TOPIC.

- I learned _____, but I need to know more about ...
- I think I'll search the web for ...
- Let's go to the library to find more information on ...
- I got a great book on _____ for my birthday! Let's look at it.
- Ask the expert (interview human resources near and far). "Mom, you work with animals everyday. What do you think about ...?" OR "Dad, you sell household chemicals every week. What do you think about ...?"

The "Just Right" Book

Factors That Affect the Understanding of Text

There are many factors that affect whether or not readers comprehend/understand text read. Consider these questions as you help your child select books.

What does your child know about the topic covered in the book?

Is your child interested in the topic?

Will your child be willing to reason or problem-solve through the text if difficulty is experienced?

Is your child familiar with this type of text (information book, fairy tale, adventure story, stories about sports, or information about animals, mystery, etc.) or does your child want to learn about a particular type of text?

Does your child prefer a book with lots of illustrations?

Does your child like to read about familiar topics or prefer to explore new topics?

Are there too many new words or a comfortable/reasonable number?

What is the purpose for reading this book?

Is this book too long (too short) for my child?

Will you need to support your child in reading this book, or is it for independent reading?

Five Finger Rule of Thumb

Teach your child to use this method in selecting a book.

After selecting a book, read the first two pages. Each time you come to a word that you cannot identify, raise one finger. If after reading the first two pages you have raised more than five fingers, this MAY indicate that the book is too difficult. At this point, decide if you want to take the challenge with this book or if you want to select another book.

Quick and Easy Book Selection (Flip Method)

When selecting a book to read, keep these simple questions in mind.

Is the book (format appealing, subject matter appropriate, etc.) **F**riendly?

Is the **L**anguage appropriate for your child?

Will the book be **I**nteresting to your child?

Does your child have **P**rior knowledge on the topic of the book?

Getting Excited about Reading (Motivation)

The following ideas can help your child get excited about reading.

Encourage your child to select books on topics that interest him/her.

Respect your child's choice of reading materials.

Encourage your child's independent reading by providing a steady flow of books and conversations about those books.

Read to your child even if he/she can read on his/her own. (Hint: You may want to read the materials ahead of time so that you are familiar with the language and pacing of the text.) Discuss what you read with your child and ask open-ended questions about the material read.

In conversation with your child, mention or talk about things you want to learn more about and your effort to find books to read on that topic.

Help your child build a library of his/her own through purchases of books and other reading material from bookstores, yard sales, garage sales, book clubs, or through book exchanges with friends and neighbors.

Encourage healthy reading competition, collaboration, and sharing between or among neighborhood kids, school friends, church friends, and/or club buddies.

To Question Or Not To Question

Asking questions about the text is a good way to initiate and maintain interest in the reading. The following questions can be useful for developing good reading habits.

Before reading

What is the title? What information can you get from the title and cover? What do you think the book is about?

Based on what you see, do you want to read the book? What are your initial predictions about the book?

What questions do you have that you would like answered or that you would like to ask the author?

During reading

Were your predictions correct?

What has happened so far?

Are you still interested in the book? Why or why not?

What has kept your interest so far?

What do you think will happen next?

What do you want to know now?

If you were to summarize the book, what two or three things would you be sure to remember to tell a friend? Are there any difficult parts? How will you handle them? Has the book surprised you? If so, how?

After reading

Rate the book on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being low and 10 high. Give reasons for your rating.

Would you recommend the book to a parent, friend, or anyone else? If so, what about the book captured and maintained your interest?

If you were to tell a friend about the book, what would you say?

What would you change about the book?

Has something similar happened in real life to you or to someone you know? Tell about it.

Have you learned anything? If so, what have you learned?

Is this book like any other book that you have read?

Would you read the book again? Why or why not?

Tips for Working with Your Child in Reading

Building Background

- Tell stories about everyday experiences and be a reading model yourself.
- Share and discuss your own reading and the child's reading with him/her.
- Share and discuss articles, diagrams, maps, and charts from the newspaper and/or magazine with your child.
- Read aloud books that challenge your child's listening vocabulary and thinking skills.
- Discuss the author's purpose for writing specific selections, articles, and books.
- Discuss the purpose of different genres such as fiction, letters, essays, journals, etc.
- Go places and do things with your children to build background knowledge and vocabulary to give them the basis for what they read.

Motivation

- As a family take a "booknic." Pack a lunch, and get a blanket and a book for each family member. Go to some scenic place outdoors. Each family member reads his/her book outdoors.
- If the weather does not permit reading outdoors, curl up beside a fire on the inside with lunch, a blanket, and a book.
- Post a large calendar where your child can keep a record of the amount of time he/she reads daily and that you read with him/her.
- Tape record "stories-to-go" for trips in the car. Select several books that you would like for your child to hear or read. Tape record the books and have the audiotapes ready for times when the child can listen to the tapes in the car or on a tape player if you are away from him/her for some reason.
- Set aside a quiet time for reading daily in your house. Read with your child at least once a day and encourage your child to read at least 30 minutes daily.

Critical Response

- Take time when reading a story or selection to ask questions, explain what is read, and interact with your child and the information.
- When you view movies or videos, compare the book and film versions noting likeness and differences.
- Encourage your child to read several selections or books on the same topic and compare what he/she learns from each one. Are there differences in the information?
- As you wait in line at the grocery store, invite your child to read the information on packages that you are purchasing. You might compare nutritional information with the food pyramid recommended for a healthy diet. You might also analyze the claims made on the food packages with your child for fact and advertisement appeal.
- As you collect coupons from various sources, have your child categorize the coupons in various ways (e.g., food groups, price, manufacturer, language used for advertisement appeal, etc.).
- Discuss similarities and differences between characters, books, events, etc.

Writing

- Help children find more reasons to write. Enlist them in taking messages, making up the shopping list, writing letters, answering email, completing catalog orders for personal items, etc.
- Encourage writing along with reading such as making your own greeting cards, gift cards, post cards, etc.
- Provide a communication center of some kind in your home such as a bulletin board.
- Post written communication of different kinds from schedules, newspaper clippings, want ads, advertisements, messages, letters, television schedules, etc.
- Encourage your child/children to keep a family/personal scrapbook with family photographs, letters, schedules, and other momentos from family life. Captions or explanations will help each person remember the significance of each item or photograph included in the scrapbook.

READ.
READ AND REREAD.
READ, REREAD, AND REFLECT.
READ, REREAD, REFLECT, AND REVISIT.
In a Word, READ!